



The Virginia Saltwater Review

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by

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OVERVIEW

Transition time! Yellow belly spot are around, cobia are still being caught as they transit out of the bay, and reports of big reds in the usual places still are coming in! Remember, we still need specific catch-and-release information on red drum, especially the larger adults (go to www.vasaltwaterjournal.com to report your catches).

We will publish a September 19 edition of the Saltwater Review, but AFTER next week, the Saltwater Review will go on hiatus for a two-week period. We will not be providing editions on September 26, or October 3, due to our participation at the State Fair of Virginia in Richmond. Be sure to come up and visit with staff in the Technology Building at the fair from September 25 through October 5, and look for the Saltwater Review to return October 10 with some early reports from the Chesapeake Bay striped bass season (opening October 4).



The VMRC's Marine Sportfish Collection Project is back in operation and receiving collections. A reminder to all Tautog anglers, we are in need of more donations of Tautog this year to help make up for the extended closure (and lack of available samples) from the commercial fishery. All project participants need to be sure to fill out the donation forms completely, being sure to provide an accurate (and legible) address and contact number, making notation of where you caught the fish and a whole weight from a certified scale (optional, but if available it would be very beneficial to the project). Also, don't forget to mark a shirt size or a hat for your reward, otherwise you will only receive an XL shirt, no exchanges. Forms must be filled out completely for rewards. We wish to thank all of our project partners for their helpfulness and assistance during what was TS Hanna (and depending on where you lived, it was much more, or much less, than what was expected): Wallace's Bait and Tackle (Hampton), Bell Isle Marina (Hampton), Long Bay Pointe Marina (Va. Beach), Chris' Bait and Tackle (Capeville), and Wachapreague Marina.



A repeat, from last week, for those more intent on watching TS Hanna than fishing reports and photos. The 2008 recreational striped bass fishery for the Chesapeake Bay Fall season will reopen October 4, 2008. The minimum size limit will be 18 inches and the maximum size limit 28 inches, with a possession limit of 2 striped bass per person. Also, recreational anglers may possess one fish, of the two fish possession limit, that is 34 inches or greater in length. The Marine Resources Commission has scheduled a public hearing in late October to decide whether there should be any changes to the December 10 - 31 recreational striped bass fishing regulations. Currently, a 1-striped bass possession limit is scheduled to be in effect, from December 10 - 31, and that fish shall not be a size that is between 28 and 34 inches total length, as in 2007.

And now, this week's fishing reports:

Chincoteague

Donna at Captain Bob's is bored! All this rain, with wind gusts up to 20 miles per hour, have kept things slow in Chincoteague. The few waterman venturing out, have caught flounder too small to keep. On the west side of the island, there is some shelter from the wind, and a few croaker, trout, and baby bluefish have been found. Hopefully the weather will improve for the weekend.

Wachapreague

The staff at Wachapreague Marina is waiting for the weather to clear up to allow for some better fishing. With the recent tropical storm, followed by the front moving through, things have been slow. However, a few croaker and flounder have been caught. Earlier in the week, good dolphin fishing could be found in the Norfolk Canyon.

At Captain Zeds, flounder and croaker were the prime fish found on hooks. Charter boats were returning with great catches of croaker, and even a keeper flounder. Rental boats are also out for croaker. Offshore, the anglers are on the hunt for dolphin and having great success.

Cape Charles

Staff from Chris' Bait and Tackle has seen little action thanks to recent storms. Flounder fishing has been good around the High Rise of the Chesapeake Bay Bridge Tunnel and Buoys 36 and 38. Speckled trout are beginning to show up in Plantation Creek, and red drum continues to be seen near Fisherman and Smith Islands.

Cherrystone Bait and Tackle has seen less action this year as compared to last year. The small amount of fishing has mostly targeted croaker and spot. Anglers have complained that sharks seem to be a menace, stealing the bait off the hooks. However, speckled trout are beginning to show in the area.

Onancock

Captain Will reports that the waters have been a little choppy over the last week, but it has not kept the die-hard fishermen off the water. Big croaker are out there, if you know where to look, and speckled trout are beginning

to come around. Spot, bluefish, and sea mullet are also being reeled in. The flounder fishing has not improved, with very few keepers being brought in.

Lower Bay/Chesapeake Bay Bridge Tunnel

Cobb's Marina has had a quiet week. Wind and rain has kept everyone on dry land.

Staff at the Sunset Boating Center reports the weather has kept most people off the water over the last week. A 20-pound croaker was caught at the Monitor Merrimac Bridge Tunnel, and a 17-pound cobia was caught at the CB buoy line off Virginia Beach.

Staff at Salt Ponds Marina has had, like many others, a slow week due to the weather.

Staff from York River Fishing Center (formally A&S Feed and Bait Supply) were seeing nice-size spot being brought in from the York River last week. Fishermen say there are plenty of good size spot to be caught in the area. Flounder are still biting with anglers bringing in two to three keepers per trip. Bluefish and croaker are still biting. Lots of puppy drum (juvenile red drum) can be found in the shallows, though they are too small.

Ken Neill, reporting secretary for the Peninsula Anglers Club, contributed the following:

There is a very good mixed offshore bite going on since Tropical Storm Hanna. There are still good numbers of billfish available. Tuna action is finally taking off. Some bigeye tuna are around, and there have been some good catches of yellowfin tuna, some in the 70-pound range. Most of this action is being found along the 100-Fathom Curve. Dolphin fishing remains very good, and wahoo action is picking up every day. Now is the best time of the year to fish offshore. Offshore bottom fishing for tilefish and grouper remains good. Closer to shore, big amberjack and jack crevalle are available at the Chesapeake Light Tower and wrecks, including Gulf Hustler, Ricks, and Hanks. Trolling spoons in these same areas can produce catches of false albacore, king mackerel, and Spanish mackerel. This action will get better as we move into October. Some spadefish remain available over the ocean wrecks.

Sea bass are plentiful and some wrecks will be covered with triggerfish. The Santore and the Tower Reef are good spots to try for triggerfish. Cobia are podding up for their migration south. Casting jigs and eels to these schools of fish is providing good action in the lower bay and along the oceanfront. Anglers running the buoys are having good luck finding cobia and anglers sitting on chum slicks are also doing well. York Spit has been a good late season spot. The cobia bite should be ending soon but it is going out with a bang. Flounder fishing is good along the structure of the Chesapeake Bay Bridge Tunnel and at the Cape Henry Wreck. Fishing is picking up along the edge of the Baltimore Channel at the mouth of the bay. Areas around the coastal wrecks are also producing some nice flounder. The Brass Spike is a good flounder spot this time of year. Speckled trout and puppy drum are biting inside of Back River. The Poquoson Flats are producing catches of speckled trout, puppy drum, and small striped bass and bluefish.

Dr. Julie Ball, IGFA International Representative for Virginia Beach, contributed the following:

Although Hanna and the recent cold front stirred the waters into a muddy mess, the tremendous early fall fishing action should resume as the waters clear. The cobia continue to track out of the bay with eager casters in hot pursuit, while flounder action slowed a little with the blow. Look for cobia in schools on the surface in open water near the mouth of the bay and along the ocean front, where fish

over 70-pounds were boated lately. Big fish are also cruising bridge pilings and circling inshore buoys. Flounder are still lining lower bay structures, drop-offs, and inlets. Respectable flatfish are also awaiting offerings of strip baits drifted over inshore and offshore structures. These same wrecks are also starting to hold larger sea bass, along with hoards of triggerfish.

The yellowbelly spot have debuted, with high hopes of citation fish any day now. Todd at Bayside Bait and Tackle reports that big spot are biting well on the Hampton Bar and off Ocean View on blood worms. Yellowbellies are also available within Lynnhaven River under the twin bridges and within Rudee Inlet just off the jetties. Some horse croaker are schooling near the CBBT, off Willoughby, and within Mobjack Bay.

Puppy drum are a hit within the shallows, inlets and creeks, as well as in the surf off Chick's Beach. Big pups up to 30-inches are taking cut mullet, shrimp, and Gulp swimming shads within Lynnhaven, with the biggest fish coming from as far back as the Thalia area.

Bull reds are still a good bet on the lower bay shoals, such as the 9-foot and Nautilus shoals. Pier anglers are still awaiting the big red drum run off the Little Island fishing pier, which may kick off after this recent North Easterly blow. Surf anglers are also having good luck with big reds and over-sized pups on peeler crabs and cut mullet in the surf off the Seaside of the Eastern Shore barrier islands. Chris at Chris' Bait and Tackle predicts that the tarpon run is basically over, as is the croaker bite out of Oyster on the Eastern Shore.

Speckled trout are showing all over, especially in the surf. Look for specks packed within the inlets, creeks, the Eastern Shore backwaters, and the Poquoson flats. Billy Dunn of Virginia Beach scored with a 7lb speck he hooked with a Mirrolure while casting in Plantation Creek this week.

Anglers are loading up with decent bluefish and schoolie-sized striped bass while casting and jigging around the HRBT and the CBBT, especially at night. Spadefish are becoming less common, but nice triggerfish are making their mark along the entire span of the Chesapeake Bay Bridge Tunnel. Although hit and miss, a few decent sheepshead and tautog are available in the same areas.

Spanish are still the staple for inshore trollers, with keeper fish taking small spoons from Sandbridge to False Cape. Spanish mackerel are also blitzing the tide rips around all four artificial islands of the Bridge Tunnel, along with lots of bluefish up to 3 pounds. King action has slowed to a halt with the dirty water, but is expected to pick up again soon. Before the blow, scattered king mackerel were caught slow trolling live bait off False Cape and over inshore wrecks and structures.

Amberjack are still roaming around local wrecks and navigational towers, along with some jack crevelle. Several schools of big spinner sharks mixed with jacks are busting bait balls just off the Chesapeake Light Tower, where several large sharks were released this week. Recently, the offshore the marlin bite is decent with several whites sighted and boated. Tuna action is on the rise, with big yellowfin and some bigeye tuna available. Nice wahoo are busting spreads and thrilling anglers with some fish topping 50 pounds in the mix. Bailer and gaffer dolphin continue to have a good season when boats can get out.

Virginia Middle Bay

Roger, of Jetts Hardware, reports that the Spanish mackerel bite has slowed down some, possibly due to stirred up water from Tropical Storm Hanna. Bluefish continue to haunt the area as well, as flounder around the Smith Point Jetty and spot in the mouths of the rivers and creeks. Striped bass appear to be around as well but until the fall season kicks in there won't be too many people looking for them.

Garrett's Marina reports the fishing has slowed down for them as well with only a few spot and croaker being caught in the Moratica area.

Virginia Beach

The Virginia Beach Fishing Center reports catches of flounder and taylor bluefish in the inlet. Puppy drum (juvenile red drum) are being reeled in at Sandbridge. Catches inshore included cobia, king mackerel, and spadefish. The head boats are out for black sea bass and croaker, and having success. The offshore scene is showing anglers good catches of dolphin and marlin.

Fisherman's Wharf Marina has not seen much action inshore, but offshore is a different story. Billfish are happening catches, including white and blue marlin, as well as sailfish. Dolphin continues to be good fishing, all around the 450 line.

Virginia Piers

The Lynnhaven Fishing Pier is not having the best luck with flounder, with most not meeting the legal size limit (19 inches). Catches of croaker and puppy drum (juvenile red drum) continue to be decent, with some being fairly good size. Spot were being reeled in more frequently, with night fishing giving better catches.

The Virginia Beach Pier continued to see decent catches of spot, bluefish, and spadefish. A few puppy drum (juvenile red drum), along with a few yellowbellies were also thrown into the mix.

Staff at the Ocean View Pier has not seen too much in the last week, but a variety of fish have been caught. Catches include spot, croaker, puppy drum (juvenile red drum), and even speckled trout.

Outer Banks, NC

As expected, Tropical Storm Hanna was the story for the weekend. Rough seas, wind, and rain served to limit angling opportunities for people wanting to catch dinner. However, the good news is that now that the storm has passed, people can expect fishing to be as good or even better, as there usually seems to be a good bite following mild storms such as Hanna. Water temperature continues to be in the upper 70s in the surf.

Offshore fishing was nonexistent for the weekend, as high seas and winds kept anglers in port. Once sea conditions subsided, anglers had their pick of species to go after. Wahoo, amberjack, king mackerel, tuna, and billfish anglers working further offshore were having productive trips at the start of the workweek, while deep droppers had success with blueline tilefish. Mid-range offshore anglers were able to find a few striped bass and a few more red drum, sheepshead, and king mackerel. Close to shore, Spanish mackerel could be caught in large numbers if you were lucky enough to find a school of them. Pier and surf fishermen had their best luck

with sea mullet and minor catches of the other usual summer denizens like spot and croaker. People plying the sounds and inlets saw their flounder catches drop off precipitously. The only good news was the speckled trout that were available in the early mornings in Green Island Slough.

South of Oregon Inlet, the fishing proved to be difficult as well until Monday rolled around. That's when somebody threw the switch and the fishing became fast and furious. The first sign was the return of the finger mullet on Monday, which were quickly followed by the puppy drum (juvenile red drum). Spanish mackerel and bluefish made their presence known around the Point on Tuesday.

Offshore fishing out of Hatteras saw their fishing improve on Tuesday as well, with good catches of dolphin, wahoo, and tuna. Tilefish, grouper, and snapper could be found on the bottom. Inshore, the gray trout were showing people they could ride out the storm as well, as well as a few speckled trout and bluefish.

If you have additional information or would like further details contact Joe Grist at (757) 247-2237.

Please credit the Virginia Marine Resources Commission's [THE SALTWATER REVIEW](http://mrc.virginia.gov/swr/saltwaterreview.shtm) as the source of the fishing information.

Virginia's Artificial Reef Program

Virginia's Artificial Reef Program enhances recreational fishing opportunities through the construction of artificial fishing reefs. Twenty sites have been established; fifteen in Chesapeake Bay and five in the Atlantic. A variety of "materials of opportunity", such as steel vessel hulls and demolition concrete have been used as well as specifically designed habitat structures. Most of the sites are marked with yellow "special purpose" buoys, established and maintained by the Artificial Reef Program.

Reef Material

Artificial reefs have been created of almost every material imaginable. Over the years, much has been learned about the importance of material selection in constructing a successful reef. There are two general classes of materials that are used to develop artificial reefs: materials of opportunity and fabricated materials.

Concrete Pipe



Materials of opportunity are materials that have outlived their original purpose, are environmentally safe, are of suitable size and shape for the target site, can be transported to a permitted site, and are both durable and stable. Materials of opportunity take many forms and should not lead to the misconception of reef programs as elaborate forms of ocean dumping.

"Reef Exercise" (REEFEX), a joint Department of Defense-civilian cooperative pilot program, provided obsolete main battle tanks, armored personnel carriers, Sheridan tanks, and other military battle hardware for ten state artificial reef programs from New York to Louisiana. Between 1994 and 2003, 8 Armored Personnel Carriers and 18 Sheridan tanks were stripped, cleaned and deployed on

some of Virginia's offshore reef sites.

Reef Ball™



Concrete, either in fabricated units specifically designed for artificial reefs or imperfect concrete manufactured products, such as culvert or rubble from razed buildings, sidewalks, roadways and bridges, has a demonstrated high success rate as artificial reef material in both marine and estuarine environments. The obvious reason for this high rate of success is the strong compatibility of the material with the environment in which it is placed, and for the purpose for which it is placed. Concrete is generally very durable and stable in reef applications.

Over the last 30 years, various fabricated concrete structures, such as reef balls™, tetrahedrons, igloos, and Tires-in-Concrete(TICs) have been developed and deployed to suite the needs of the reef environment being created.



The Virginia Artificial Reef guys...



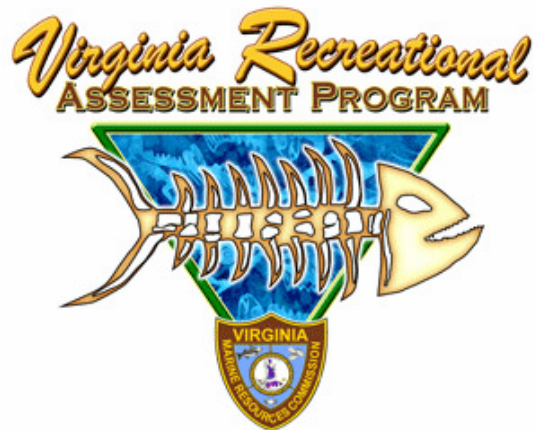
For more information on Virginia's Artificial Reef Program, contact Mike Meier at (757) 247-2263 or by e-mail at mike.meier@mrc.virginia.gov

Get Hooked!

Report at

www.vasaltwaterjournal.com

The Virginia Marine Resources Commission wants to know about the saltwater fish you caught and if you threw it back or took it home for dinner. How big was it? What species was it? Where did you catch it? This self-reported catch-and-release information will be posted on-line, giving the recreational angler a broader picture of what everyone else is catching -- and where.



The Fisherman's Journal is a tool intended to benefit the individual angler, the fishing community, and fishery managers. It allows individual anglers to keep an easy-to-retrieve record of their successful fishing experiences. It allows the fishing community to share and learn about other anglers' experiences. Finally, it benefits fishery managers by allowing them to assess fish populations by analyzing data provided by you, the recreational fisherman.

You will be able to report catch-and-release ranges, in addition to individual fish kept or released.

On those days that you catch-and-release 50 bluefish, you can just report the number caught and a range of lengths. Reporting individual measurements on more highly prized species -- such as Red Drum, Striped Bass and Flounder -- provides a greater benefit for everyone.

Anglers also may report their fishing trip information, including general location, time of day, weather and water conditions and type of gear and bait used. This information could be extremely valuable to other anglers to give them an idea of what is caught, where it is caught, and what bait is working on what species.

This self-reporting program will help anglers to become more successful and will provide fishery managers with important anecdotal information on recreational catches. The voluntary on-line reporting system is called the "Saltwater Fisherman's Journal," and is found at www.vasaltwaterjournal.com.

A screenshot of the Virginia Marine Resources Commission's "Recreational Fishing Online Reporting" website. The page has a blue header with the commission's name and logo. Below the header, there's a section for "Recreational Saltwater Fishing" with a "Welcome Jgrist," message. A "Virginia Recreational Assessment Program" logo is also present. A box on the left shows statistics for June 16, 2008: Members: 1,457, Trips: 295, Catches: 3,941. A central box titled "Red Drum Reports are Needed!" contains text about collecting length data for a stock assessment. Another box titled "New 2008 Tautog Regs" lists regulations: Closed Season (May 1 through June 24), Minimum Size Limit (14 inches), and Possession Limit (4 per person). At the bottom, there are "Related Links" and "Help" sections.

ATTENTION VIRGINIA SALTWATER ANGLERS!!!












THE VIRGINIA MARINE RESOURCES COMMISSION

***WANTS YOUR FISH....
TO MEASURE AND AGE.***

You catch it, you fillet it,

**but instead of throwing the remains in the trash,
please donate them to science.**

The Marine Sportfish Collection Project will focus on species of fish that are difficult to collect through the agency's normal sampling program. Anglers are asked to donate their filleted carcasses (head and tail intact) of legal and fresh-caught:

COBIA		RED DRUM	
SHEEPSHEAD		BLACK DRUM	
SPADEFISH		TAUTOG	
TILEFISH		GROUPE	
KING MACKEREL		SPANISH MACKEREL	
BLUEFISH (OVER 16 POUNDS OR 36 INCHES)			

In return for participating in the project, the agency will provide a ONE FREE PROJECT TEE SHIRT or HAT, FOR EACH PARTICIPANT, PER MONTH of the DONATION.

Please visit these bait and tackle merchants to participate:

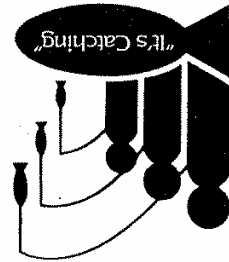
**Bell Isle Marine (Hampton) Chris' Bait and Tackle (Capeville)
Long Bay Pointe Marina (Virginia Beach) Wachapreague Marina
Wallace's Bait and Tackle (Hampton)**

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Practice

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